

From: [Behnke, Kristina](#)
To: [Cashmere, Jason](#)
Subject: Re: Region 5 ER Notification #2 (Final): U.S. Steel Hexavalent Chrome Release, Portage, IN
Date: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 7:24:55 AM
Attachments: [image001.gif](#)

Typically, whoever is on backup response in Chicago (during business hours) or phone duty (after hours) sends out the initial ER notification. I'll forward you the one for this one in case you didn't get it. Then once the actual responder is on scene and has an update, they send an update out. It's typically towards the end of the evening if it happens early in the day.

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On Apr 12, 2017, at 7:09 AM, Cashmere, Jason <cashmere.jason@epa.gov> wrote:

Hi Kristina,

A question on this, does the responding OSC typically send these out for an ER? This is the 1st time I've seen one.

Thanks!

Jason R. Cashmere

On-Scene Coordinator
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USEPA Region 5
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From: Behnke, Kristina
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 21:25
To: R5 ER Notification List <R5_ER_Notification_List@epa.gov>
Cc: Beslow, Mike <beslow.mike@epa.gov>; Maguire, Andrew <maguire.andrew@epa.gov>; Mendez, Thomas <mendez.thomas@epa.gov>; Thomas, Craig <thomas.craig@epa.gov>; Lippert, Jeffrey <lippert.jeffrey@epa.gov>; Cashmere, Jason <cashmere.jason@epa.gov>; Goeks, Todd <goeks.todd@epa.gov>; Johnson, Mark <johnson.mark@epa.gov>; Karecki, Edward <karecki.edward@epa.gov>
Subject: Region 5 ER Notification #2 (Final): U.S. Steel Hexavalent Chrome Release, Portage, IN
Region 5 ER Notification #2 (Final): U.S. Steel Hexavalent Chrome Release, Portage, IN (NRC#

1175399)

Report as of: 4/11/17 at 1930 CST

Overview: On 4/11/17 at approximately 9:30 CST, U.S Steel Corporation discovered a green discoloration in the water near an outfall at their facility in Portage, IN, discharging into Burns Waterway (aka Burns Ditch). U.S. Steel reported this to the National Response Center (NRC #1175399). Two EPA OSCs were nearby at another facility went to the site to investigate. Upon arriving at the scene, OSCs Beslow and Mendez met with U.S Steel's environmental manager and were told that the facility had determined the material was hexavalent chrome. The investigation into the cause and volume released is still underway. At this time, it appears that hexavalent chrome waste reached the regular treatment plant on site, rather than the chrome treatment plant. At this time, the release is still ongoing at the outfall. The plant side source of the spill has been secured, with the release at the outfall expected to stop soon.

State, Local, and other Federal Agency Action: The USCG, IDEM, National Park Service and Indiana American Water were on scene. EPA notified local water intakes in Gary, East Chicago, and Ogden Dunes. Indiana American Water in Ogden Dunes shut down their intake earlier today. The intake is still shut down at this time, with water reserves struggling. NOAA has provided an ecological risk number and ATSDR has provided a human health number. Out of precaution, the National Park Service has shut down the nearby lakefront and beaches.

EPA Actions: EPA OSCs Maguire, Behnke, and Mendez are on site. A set of samples were collected before dark. EPA and START assisted with taking samples. Samples were taken upstream of the outfall, at the outfall, and downstream of the outfall. Two samples were also taken at the nearby Indiana American Water intake and wet well. A subset of samples, including the samples taken at the water intake, were sent to an on-site lab for rapid turnaround. The highest concentration of in the samples was detected at the outfall was 949 ppb. The samples taken at the American Water intake and wet well were non-detects for total chromium. The rest of the samples will be sent off to a lab in Valparaiso later tonight to be run for hexavalent chromium. Overnight, samples will be taken at the outfall every 2 hours and another full round of samples will be taken tomorrow morning.

Media Interest: There has been significant media interest, and the National Park Service has issued a press release closing two beaches at the Indiana Dunes National Seashore.

EPA Region 5 OSC contact: Andy Maguire, 312-758-8672

This will be the final ER Notification, further updates will be provided by POLREPs.

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